DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 129 553 RC 009 548

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TITLE	An Inquiry into Rural Dwellers' Opinions about Living Conditions in Urban and Rural Places.
INSTITUTION	USSR Academy of Sciences, Novosibirsk.
PUB DATE	Aug 76
NOTE	20p.; Not available in hard copy due to small print size of original document. Paper presented at the World Congress of Rural Sociology (4th, Torun, Poland, August 1976)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Attitudes; Communications; Evaluation; Foreign Countries; Health; Housing; Life Style; *Living Standards; Occupational Mobility; Population Distribution; Recreation; *Rural Population; *Rural Urban Differences; Social Services; *Surveys; Transportation; *Values; Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS	Quality of Life; *USSR (Novosibirsk); *World Congress of Rural Sociology (4th)

ABSTRACT

Utilizing data derived from a questionnaire survey of the rural population of Novosibirsk province in the USSR, the following hypothesis was tested: the attitude of rural inhabitants toward urban and rural conditions is characterized by a considerable preponderance of positive evaluations of dominant rural conditions and transient urban conditions and by considerable preponderance of negative evaluations of dominant urban and transient rural conditions. Living conditions were specified with reference to city or country in terms of the following general aspects of life: working conditions and content of work, distinctive job tasks, pay, place of work, and opportunity for social/occupational mobility; housing; recreational service; public trade; comprehensive and vocational training; health services; consumer services; transport and communication facilities; building types and landscape; size and density of population; and pace of life. Results indicated most rural people: favored dominant rural conditions; favored transient urban conditions; did not favor urban dominant conditions; and did not favor rural transient conditions. It was concluded that for these rural people, rural life was of independent value and the attractiveness of transient urban features indicated the desire to transfer modern conveniences to the countryside. (JC)

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FOURTH WORLD CONGRESS FOR RURAL SOCIOLOGY
Torun, August, 1976

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AN INQUIRY INTO RURAL DWELLERS' OPINIONS ABOUT LIVING CONDITIONS IN URBAN AND RURAL PLACES

Seminar 18: The Quality of Life: The Impact of Expectations On Development.

CS009548

Novosibirsk
1976

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U.S.S.R. ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
Siberian Branch
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AN INQUIRY INTO RURAL DWELLERS' OPINIONS ABOUT LIVING CONDITIONS IN URBAN AND RURAL PLACES

Preprint

Novosibirsk

1976

1. "Dominant" and "Transient" Living Conditions in Urban and Rural Places

The concern of this paper is investigation of rural inhabitants' opinions of urban and rural life styles or, more precisely, of those components which constitute the "background" of human life activity, i.e. of socioeconomic living conditions in rural and urban places.

Human life activity, in its main manifestations, is the same for rural and urban dwellers: in both contexts people work, study, consume goods and services, raise children, satisfy their spiritual needs and the like. Each sphere of life activity has the corresponding conditions. In this respect, the set of objective living conditions is, to a certain degree, universal and independent of place. But with regard to quality, character, specificity of particular kinds of human life activity manifestation, it is very important to know in what context they are realised, in city or country.

We have selected common conditions of human life activity and then specified them with reference to urban and rural settings (Table 1).

The specific urban and rural conditions play different role in determining urban and rural styles of life. According to this, all the above conditions can be divided, with a certain degree of conventionality, into two groups (Table 2).

The first group is made by such living conditions which are specific, unique and stable features of urban or rural

Table 1

Living Conditions Specified with Reference to City or Country*

Nos.	Common living conditions	Urban conditions	Rural conditions
1.	Working conditions and content of work; distinctive job tasks; pay; the set of working places and the opportunities for social-occupational mobility	Predominance of highly skilled labour; fixed working hours; stable pay regardless the season; a broad set of working places and broad opportunities for social-occupational mobility	Predominance of low-skilled labour, outdoor job tasks, work directly with soil, animals; "intermittent" non-fixed working hours; unstable pay; seasonal character of work; limited choice of working places and restricted opportunities for social-occupational advancement within the rural place
2.	Housing and living facilities	The prepondereant type is modern dwelling (apartments with modern conveniences)	The prepondereant type of dwelling is rural traditional (a single-family house with traditional, non-modern conveniences)
3.	Conditions connected with recreational services	The concentration of various recreational facilities; multiple forms of services and multiple forms of leisure activities; the superiority of city in terms of recreational innovations	Minimum number of recreational facilities; the seasonese of their services and of leisure activities; persistence of traditional cultural patterns
4.	Conditions connected with public trade of manufacturing goods and food-stuffs	The wide network of shops; specialised shops with relatively broad assortment of food-stuffs and manufactured goods of modern patterns	Narrow network of shops; prepondereantly non-specialised shops with limited assortment of food-stuffs and manufactured goods of outdated patterns; the existence of private households as a means to compensate the food-stuffs unavailable in shops
5.	Conditions connected with obtaining comprehensive and vocational training	Sufficient number of high schools and the possibility for children to get education in the place of residence; high level of teaching in schools; the concentration in cities of technical vocational and higher learning institutions and, due to this, broad opportunities for getting vocational training	Insufficient number of high schools and limited opportunities for children to get education in their place of residence; the lower level of teaching comparing to current standards; almost complete absence of technical vocational and higher learning institutions and limited opportunities for getting vocational training

(to be continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Nos.	Common living conditions	Urban conditions	Rural conditions
6.	Health services	Advanced network of health facilities; high professional level of medical workers; wide use of modern scientific methods of medical treatment and disease-prevention service	Insufficient number of medical facilities; short supply of medical workers, their relatively low level of professional training; underutilisation of modern scientific methods of medical treatment and of disease--prevention service
7.	Consumer services	Wide network of consumer facilities; variety of these facilities; intensive use made by urban population of service facilities	Absence of a number of services; non-traditional character of the majority of services and, due to this, their underutilisation by rural population
8.	Transport and communication facilities	Dense network of transport routes, roads with hard covering; developed intra-city public transport; city is centre of external communications	Underdeveloped network of roads with hard covering; remoteness from centres of transportation; limited connections with the outside
9.	Type of building, landscape	The predominance of multi-storeyed houses built of modern building materials; dynamic character of the type of building (architectural styles); artificial landscape, air pollution, congestion	Predominantly traditional wooden low-ceiling buildings; stable architectural style; natural landscape, fresh air, spaciousness
10.	Density and size of population	High density and population size; human relations are rigidly formal; contacts are intensive, anonymous, diverse, individual is under institutional control	Low density and small size of population; human relations are nearly non-formal; contacts are of face-to-face character and monotonous; individual is under strict social control
11.	Pace of life	Pace of life is quick; typical are haste, nervousness, fuss	Pace of life is measured; no fuss, nervousness, haste is absent

* In describing living conditions with regard to city and country we have used partly the papers by A.Przesławski "Man and City" (Warsaw, 1960) and by V.M. Dolgi "Pre-industrial city and some problems of urban culture" (Russian) in Urbanizatsia i rub. kl. v. usl. nauchn.-tekhn. rev. Moscow, 1970.

life. We have termed them as dominant conditions in city and country. On the account of them being dominant in city and country, respectively, they are polar, negative to each other so that if condition A is peculiar to city, then to country(-A) is peculiar. The whole history of the existence of rural and urban types of places testifies that with regard to these conditions there always has existed a qualitative distinction between these styles of life.

The second group is made by conditions of the same nature but differing either in level , or intensity, or, else, degree of development. Unlike the former group, they are not negative, not polar, they cannot change into their opposites, but can assume different values ranging from "0 and over". This group of conditions includes, above all, those benefits of scientific-technological change which historically, on the strength of specific functioning of the city, stand out primarily as the property of city and only after some lapse of time may become a feature of rural tenor of life. "Not only implements but other new productive forces also, including knowledge at different science levels, i.e. everything new which changes the basis all this appeared as the creation of cities" (Sokolov, 1970: 184).

Apart from this, over many centuries city has exploited country without compensating or only little compensating those physical assets which were coming to city from country. As a result, technological, economic, cultural urbanization, i.e. nearly all types of urbanization have been carried out in city at much higher rates than in country.

Living conditions of the latter group are not stable components of rural and urban styles of life; they can change, be transmitted, penetrate from country to city, from city to country. We have termed them transient conditions of urban and rural life.

Fig. 1 shows the relationship between the living conditions of the both groups. The joint part of circles are the conditions of the second group, i.e. transient ones;

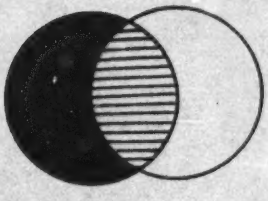

Fig. 1

non-overlapping areas of the circles are dominant conditions.

2. The Hypothesis of the Study and Methods of Investigation

The above approach to living conditions as dominant and transient feature of life style allowed us to state and test the following assumption: the attitude of rural inhabitants toward urban and rural conditions is characterised, on the one hand, by considerable preponderance of positive evaluations of dominant rural conditions and transient urban conditions; and, on the other, by considerable preponderance of negative evaluations of dominant urban and transient rural conditions in the countryside. In other words, for rural population consisting of people whose best part of life was spent in rural places, attractive is not the urban way of life as such but those urban features which, according to their nature, cannot be viewed as part and parcel of the urban style alone; they are possible and necessary in the countryside also but are a monopoly of urban places due to higher rates of technological, economic and cultural urbanisation in city than in country. At the same time people are attracted by those features which are integral part of rural life style.

This paper has been based on empirical data collected in the questionnaire survey of the rural population of the Novosibirsk province conducted at the Sector for Rural and Urban Social Problems (Institute of Economics and Industrial

Table 2

Dominant and transient conditions

	City	Country
Dominant conditions	A wide set of working places and broad opportunities for social-occupational mobility; non-seasonal character of work	Limited set of working places and limited chances for social-occupational advancement within the country; preponderant type of work tasks is direct work with soil, animals; seasonal character of work
	The concentration in city of various cultural facilities; the priority of city in assimilation of cultural innovations	Minimum number of cultural facilities; the persistence of traditional cultural patterns
	Wide network of shops	Narrow network of shops
	The concentration of higher and secondary special institutions	Complete absence of higher learning institutions and nearly that of vocational schools
	City is centre of external communications	Limited connections with the outside
	Dynamic character of the type of building (architectural styles); artificial landscape	Stable architectural style; natural landscape
	High density and size of population; on the strength of this, human relations are strictly formal; contacts are anonymous, intensive and diversified; individual is under institutional control	Low density and size of population; due to this, human relations are weakly formalised; contacts are of monotonous and face-to-face character; individual is under strict social control
	Pace of life is quick; hurry, nervousness, fuss	Measured pace of life; hurry, nervousness, fuss absent
Transient conditions	Predominance of highly skilled labour; fixed working hours; stable pay (regardless the season)	Predominance of low-skilled labour; non-fixed working hours; nonstable pay level (seasonal)
	Preponderant is modern type of dwelling (apartment with modern conveniences)	Preponderant is traditional dwelling (single-family houses without modern conveniences)
	Multiple recreational services and respective multiple leisure activities	Sameness of recreational services and sameness of leisure activities
	Large number of specialised shops with large selection of manufactured goods of modern patterns and of food-stuffs	Village general stores with limited selection of outdated goods and very incomplete assortment of food-stuffs; the existence of private households as a means to compensate absent foodstuffs

Table 2 (continuation)

	City	Country
Transient conditions	Sufficient number of secondary schools and chances for children to get education in place of residence; high level of teaching in high schools	Insufficient number of secondary schools and difficulties for children to get education in their place of residence; the level of teaching in secondary schools below the current standards
	Developed network of health facilities; high level of professional training of medical workers; wide use of modern scientific methods of medical treatment and disease-prevention service	Insufficient number of medical facilities; shortage of medical workers, their relatively low level of professional training; underutilization of up-to-date scientific methods of treatment and disease-prevention services
	Wide spread of consumer service facilities; the diversity of this sphere; intensive use made of service facilities by urban population	The absence of many services; non-traditional character of many of the services and their underutilization on this account by rural population
	Dense network of transport routes, roads with hard covering; developed intra-city public transport	Underdeveloped roads; their poor quality
	Mainly multi-storeyed houses built of modern building materials, air pollution, overcrowding	Predominantly traditional wooden low-ceiling buildings; fresh air, spaciousness

Engineering, Siberian Branch of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences) in 1972.

We have analysed the replies to four open-ended questions:

"What do you like in rural life?"

"What do you dislike in rural life?"

"What do you like in urban life?"

"What do you dislike in urban life?"

These items seem to be the most informative from the perspective of the stated task, since they invite the respondent to evaluate certain urban and rural conditions in terms of "like - dislike" which were later interpreted respectively as negative or positive attitude of rural inhabitants toward particular living conditions.

The replies to these questions can be classified into two types: first, replies pointing out to specific living conditions with their evaluations and, second, the replies characterizing rather the respondents themselves than the object of their evaluation (neutral attitude, non-discriminating evaluation, positive or negative attitude toward rural or urban as a whole, non-awareness in case of evaluating urban conditions and the like). The percentages of replies containing indications to specific living conditions in the total number of replies were as follows: of the total (118.3%) replies to the item about positive rural features, 85.1%; of the total (141.0%) about negative rural features, 78.1%; of the total (141.3%) about positive urban features, 108.1%; and of the total (117.7%) about negative urban features, 76.0%. According to the purpose of our analysis, we have selected only the replies of the first type.

The next step in testing our hypothesis was identification of these replies with the pre-discerned (Table 2) dominant and transient rural and urban conditions. This procedure made it possible to compare positive and negative attitudes of rural inhabitants toward these urban and rural conditions.

The information arranged in this manner is presented on

several tables in which the relationship between positive and negative attitudes toward dominant and transient urban and rural features is seen.

3. The Attitudes of Rural Dwellers toward Rural Life Conditions

Now consider the Table characterisi[illegible] relationship between positive and negative attitudes [illegible]oward dominant rural features (Table 3).

Table 3

Attitudes of rural dwellers toward dominant rural features (%)

Nos.	Dominants of rural life	Positive		Negative	
		Persons who mentioned this feature	Indications to this feature	Persons who indicated this feature	Indications to this feature
1.	Natural landscape	36.4	25.8	2.5	2.1
2.	Measured pace of life	16.0	11.3	-	-
3.	Face-to-face contacts, absence of anonymity, rigid social control	8.1	5.8	0.9	0.8
4.	Specificity of agricultural work; work on soil with animals etc.	6.6	4.6	1.2	1.0
5.	Limited ties with the outside	-	-	0.8	0.7
6.	Limited set of jobs	-	-	1.3	1.1
	Total	67.1	47.5	6.7	5.7

The comparison between positive and negative ratings of dominant rural features shows that the percentage of rural dwellers who reported dominants of rural life attractive was ten times as high as of those who reported their negative attitude toward them. Among them, those who appreciated such dominants as natural landscape and nearness to nature

were 14.6 times as many them those who rated this feature negatively preferring perhaps "the lights of the great city".

Rural inhabitants positively rating face-to-face character of contacts, lack of anonymity, rigid social control were 9 times those who rated these conditions negatively interpreting them as much scandal, "life in the public eye" et. There existed a large disparity (5.5 times) between rural inhabitants who highly valued the work on soil, with animals and felt pride in being "corn-growers", "bread-winners" and those who saw the farm work as "eternal dirt, manure" etc.

Such dominant feature of rurality as measured pace of life seems to have absolute value for rural dwellers since not a single respondent reported negative attitude toward it, whereas 16 percent named this feature as attractive.

All rural people were negatively oriented to such dominants of rural life as limited connections with the outside world and limited set of jobs. But their percentage was very small - 0.8 and 1.3 percent of all who answered this question.

In sum, we can note that although the set of non-attractive rural dominants was somewhat larger than that of attractive, the percentage of their advocates was fairly high to attest to a stronger attraction of rural dominant features for rural people.

Quite a different relationship of evaluations was obtained with regard to transient rural features (Table 4). Negative attitudes were obviously prevailing. On the whole, the percentage of people who were opposed to transient rural features were about 4 times those who took them favourably. There was only one exception, i.e. private households, where positive evaluations prevailed (about 2.7 times). In effect, it was the only attribute causing favourable reaction (considerably exceeding negative attitudes). As to two other transient features- type of building, village appearance and pay level - the percentage of people who reported

Table 4

Rural people's attitude toward transient rural conditions (%)

No. Transient rural conditions	Positive		Negative	
	Percentage of people who named this condition	Percentage of this condition to all reported conditions	Percentage of people who named this condition	Percentage of this condition to all reported conditions
1. Private household	17.6	12.5	6.6	5.5
2. Building, village appearance	0.3	0.3	6.3	5.3
3. Non-fixed working hours, low-skilled heavy work	-	-	13.8	11.7
4. Pay level	0.1	0.1	1.6	1.3
5. Children's educational facilities	-	-	1.5	1.3
6. Public utilities	-	-	13.1	11.0
7. Level of cultural services	-	-	12.1	10.3
8. Level of distribution of industrial and manufactured goods	-	-	8.9	7.5
9. State of roads, transport services	-	-	4.7	4.0
10. Quality of medical services	-	-	2.8	2.3
Total	18.0	12.9	71.4	60.2

favourable attitude was negligible (0.3 and 0.1 percent).

Therefore, transient features of rural life caused mostly negative attitudes seen in the percentage of rural people who reported them and in the very set of these features.

4. Rural People's Attitudes Toward Urban Conditions

The comparison between positive and negative evaluations of dominant urban conditions gave quite a different picture than in case of rural dominant conditions. Here prevailing was negative attitude: the percentage of rural people negatively oriented to urban dominant features was 2.5 times those who were attracted by them (Table 5).

Table 5

Rural people's attitude toward urban dominant features

No.	Transient urban conditions	Positive		Negative	
		Percentage of people who named this condition	Percentage of this condition to all named conditions	Percentage of persons who named this condition	Percentage of this condition to all named conditions
1.	Quick pace of life	1.3	0.9	-	-
2.	Size and density of population (overcrowding)	3.4	2.4	34.0	29.2
3.	Concentration of cultural facilities	7.0	5.0	-	-
4.	Presence and diversity of vocational educational facilities	1.1	0.8	-	-
5.	Job diversity	1.2	0.9	-	-
6.	Anonymity and secluded character of contacts	-	-	1.1	0.9
	Total	14.0	10.0	35.1	31.1

Despite the quantitative preponderance of negative ratings, however, their structural poverty is obvious: in effect, negative ratings were obtained only by one dominant of urban life, i.e. congestion. At the same time positively evaluated were, though in small percentages, nearly all dominant urban conditions. Among them the highest percentage had such characteristic as concentration of cultural activities. The remaining favourably evaluated urban dominants were distributed more or less uniformly. It should be noted that the percentages of positively rated urban features were extremely small as compared to the percentage of nearly the only one negatively evaluated urban dominant, i.e. overcrowding. Their relationship is as follows: quick pace of life - 1:32; overcrowding - 1:12; concentration of cultural facilities - 1:6; availability and diversity of vocational training facilities - 1:37; wide choice of jobs - 1:32.

The reaction of rural people to transient urban features was characterized by considerable preponderance of positive ratings: they were 2.3 times as many as negative (Table 6).

The highest percentage among positively rated transient urban features was obtained by such as highly-skilled and less heavy work; fixed working hours; diversity of recreational services, wide possibilities for leisure activities; modern home conveniences. Thus, character of work and working hours in city were rated by rural people only positively, the number of positive ratings of conditions for leisure time activities was 27.5 times the number of negative ratings, of public services 8.6 times. This relationship shows that just these transient urban features cause the greatest gap between positive and negative evaluations.

The main bulk of negative ratings (almost 50 percent) was concentrated on conditions connected with the distribution of manufactured goods and, especially, food-stuffs. They were 1.3 times as many as positive evaluations of these conditions. The presence of private household was evaluated by rural people as highly beneficial, and its absence in city which entails the necessity to purchase

Table 6

Rural people's attitude toward transient urban conditions

No.	Transient urban conditions	Percentage of persons who named this condition	Percentage of this condition to all named conditions	Percentage of persons who named this condition	Percentage of this condition to all named conditions
1.	Degree of modernity, air pollution, congestion	4.1	2.9	9.9	8.5
2.	Diversity of recreational services; opportunities for leisure activities	22.0	15.5	0.8	0.6
3.	High-skilled labour, fixed working hours, stable pay	30.8	21.8	-	-
4.	Having to purchase manufactured goods and foods in shops; absence of private plot	17.3	12.3	22.2	19.1
5.	Modern public services	14.6	10.3	1.7	1.4
6.	Children's educational opportunities	2.2	1.6	-	-
7.	Developed road networks, intra-city public transport as the chief means of conveyance within city	31.0	2.1	2.9	2.5
	Total	94.1	66.5	40.9	35.0

food and spend money make them see unfavourably these urban conditions. Besides, rural people gave low ratings to the quality of purchased food.

Rather high number of negative responses were given to such transient attribute of urban life as air pollution and overcrowding (9.9 percent). This figure is the more essential because it is twice as high as the number of positive ratings of the modernity level of urban life.

But on the whole, transient urban conditions caused rural people feel favourably.

5. Conclusions
(Testing the Hypothesis)

After tabulating totals in Tables 3-6 we are not far from the conclusions supporting our hypothesis (Table 7).

Table 7

Rural people's ratings of dominant rural and urban conditions

No.	Rural and urban conditions	Percentage of persons evaluating urban and rural conditions	
		positively	negatively
1.	Dominant rural conditions	67.1	6.7
2.	Transient rural conditions	18.0	71.4
3.	Dominant urban conditions	14.0	35.1
4.	Transient urban conditions	94.1	40.9

The relationship of the data in the first line of the Table shows tenfold preponderance of positive attitudes of rural people toward dominant rural conditions, whereas the relationship in the second line of the Table (1:4) attests to a highly critical attitude of rural people toward transient rural conditions. A quite reverse picture is the relationship of data in the third and fourth lines: the relationship of the third line (1:2.5) obviously is not

in favour of positive ratings of dominant urban conditions, and the relationship of the fourth line (2.3:1) tells us that the overwhelming majority of rural people appraised the urban advantages of transient nature at their true worth.

The results of the comparison of table data by columns can also serve as evidence in support of our hypothesis. It turned out that the percentage of rural people who positively rated dominant rural conditions was nearly 5 times that for whom more attractive were dominant urban conditions. The number of rural people, however, rating negatively the rural dominant features was only one-fifth the number of rural people who criticised urban dominants. As far as rural people's attitudes toward transient features are concerned, observed was the preponderance of positive ratings of these conditions in city and negative in the countryside. This relationship was presented as 5.2 : 1 and 1.7 : 1, respectively.

The results of the analysis enabled us to arrive at the following conclusions:

1. The conditions inherent to rural life and defined by us as dominant rural conditions have favourable response from most rural people.

2. Urban life was attractive for rural people by those attributes which represent mostly changeable conditions and characterise the consequences of quicker rates of urbanisation in city against country rather than the essence of urban life style. These are those attributes of urban life which we have called transient.

Thus, we can assert that for rural people rural life is of independent value and the attractiveness of transient urban features shows rather their need that modern conveniences be "transferred" into the countryside also.

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AN INQUIRY INTO RURAL DWELLERS' OPINIONS ABOUT LIVING CONDITIONS IN URBAN AND RURAL PLACES

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Signed to be printed 2.07.1976
Paper format 60x84[1]/16
Volume 1.1 printed sheets
Order No. 187 100 copies

Mimeographed at the Institute of Economics and Industrial Engineering, Siberian Branch of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences

Novosibirsk